

A Handbook for the New Teacher

Willard Abraham



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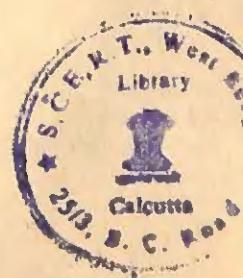
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A Handbook for the New Teacher

WILLARD ABRAHAM

Chairman, Department of Special Education
Arizona State University

Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York



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Introduction

"Can I find a husband in teaching?"

"Is it true that most teachers are old maids?"

"Can I support a family on a teacher's salary?"

"Will I like working with all of you?"

"Will you like me?"

"Will you expect too much of me?"

"This is a respectable job, but is it really respected?"

These are just a few of the many questions you will ask in the first days, weeks, and months of your teaching career. You will wonder, too, about where to live, in whom you can confide, how to fill out the seemingly endless forms, and what are the implications of the theory-versus-practice problems through which every new teacher worries. None of these concerns or questions is really new, and maybe that's a letdown for you!

As you enter this field you may sense a kinship with the little girl who was asked by her teacher to write a one-sentence description of a book the child had read about penguins. She wrote, "This book told me more about penguins than I care to know." And that's how you may have felt about your undergraduate preparation, but now you'll have a chance to dip into the reservoir of information and knowledge, ideas and techniques, skills and materials so abundantly accumulated.

All the emotions you have, whether based on eagerness, anticipation, anxiety, or fear, have preceded you in thousands of newcomers to the field of teaching. The pounding heart of your first day was also the loudest noise in the world on my first day and the first day of practically every teacher since the first one scratched his name on the stone "blackboard" of his cavelike classroom. The wonder you have about whether those smiling faces looking at you are aware of your damp hands and dry throat is a wonder handed down from generation to generation just as is a dimple, an uncontrollable cowlick, or twinkling blue eyes from father to son to son to son.

You weren't alone in your college days as you looked ahead, and you're not alone now. Your professional family is immense, and it's on your

side. This largest cheering section in the world wants you to succeed, and for some very practical reasons, too.

The teaching profession has been taking some tough raps lately, and it needs all the intelligent, enthusiastic new blood it can get. Teachers have to do more and know more than ever before, and the evidence is strong that despite unfounded accusations to the contrary they are also accomplishing more than ever before. In the field of history you have to include some complete eras that were undreamed of when most of us were in school. Totally new approaches in science and mathematics are demanded. The teaching of foreign languages requires insights that our rote-memory teachers of years ago seldom had or used.

In this age when we are beginning to recognize that guided children are at least as important as guided missiles we are eager to welcome you, and your ideas, dreams, and creativity. We know that although most of you are straight out of college many of you have the experiences of parenthood, military service, foreign travel, and responsible related or unrelated jobs in your background to add to your college preparation. But the sheltered young girl is still among our new teachers, and she has plenty of company. The migrant quality of most of our population since World War II has broadened the base from which our newcomers are drawn, so that the teacher in California is likely to have been born in Connecticut, reared in Illinois, and college-prepared in Oregon—and all of that is part of the richness which you bring to this profession of ours.

We hope you will find us kind and friendly. Some of us won't be, of course, but that's life, as the old saying goes—or there's liable to be a crumb in any feather bed. We're not proud of the "crumbs" and we hope you won't feel any! Our hope is for a smooth voyage, with a comfortable send-off and a long journey. Help us overlook or correct our own individual weaknesses, and join us in what is literally the greatest experiment in public education the world has ever witnessed.

It is an adventure—but also a means of earning a living. It has a lot of surprises and excitement—but also personal and professional problems. It's built on accomplishment and satisfaction—but also some elements of frustration and monotony.

We wish we could entice you into your first teaching experience by saying it will all be the professional equivalent of a "snap course," but entrants now coming along are too sophisticated for that kind of fakery. You've heard and seen some of the negative factors, but you joined up with us anyway. Because you've survived both the bait and barbs of other occupations and professions, you don't have to be sold all over again on teaching as a "good deal." Apparently for you as an individual it is and will be one.

Although the first adjustments may be a bit of a strain, we hope you take courage from the wise words attributed to Thomas Macaulay, the English historian, when he was four years old. A maid spilled hot coffee on him, and then made a great fuss over him because of the accident. However, he gently but firmly pushed her away, saying, "Thank you, madam, but the agony has abated."

So let us try to help you a little bit over the first "agonies" as you start out. Let us guide you just a little through the pitfalls, short cuts, and mazes of an administrative, personality, or paper-work nature, problems which most of us have managed to survive. But don't let us live your lives or take away your fun.

We may smile about the challenge of teaching, but it is definitely there if you want it. And some of the most beautiful words ever written can provide the guidance so many of us need, if we will only let them: "Thou canst not stir a flower without troubling of a star." On possibilities like this our profession is built.

Although most of the examples that follow are from the elementary school, many of the ideas and much of the advice apply equally well to the new high school teacher. The problems on the two levels are more similar than they are different.

So have a good time. Gripe a little, dream a little, gossip a little—and once in a while toss a look over your shoulder, and you'll notice that we're always there, hoping we can provide whatever moral support you need or want, and hoping too that you'll share your problems with us. After all, we want to feel needed, although we'll never be as necessary to you as you are to all of us who preceded you and to the children whose future depends so completely on you as you seek the place you want in the teaching world.

"Where Did You Come From? Where Are You Going?"

In an old Gluyas Williams cartoon (of "Suburban Heights" fame) there is a scene in a crowded elevated or subway car. It shows a long line of people walking through the car, seeming to wander mysteriously from an unknown origin to an unseen destination. "Where did they come from? Where are they going?" plaintively asks the cartoon caption.

WHO ARE YOU?

And that's how it is with those of us in the field of teaching, asking the same thing of you who join our ranks each year. We want to know all about you. "All?" you might ask quizzically. "That I intend to teach only until I get married? Or that I'm rebelling against a family who wanted me to be a doctor? Or that this is a stop-off for me on the way to school administration? Or that I'm just supplementing the family income so we can buy a new car or home?"

We know all of that and a great deal more about you already—as a group. Perhaps you would like to share some things about yourselves, about the other beginning teachers starting out with you. We know all of this, for example:



. . . that most of you are from the so-called middle class, from families whose incomes are close to the country's average—but some of you right up to this minute have never had to bother keeping the check stubs up to date or balancing the monthly bank statement, and others have literally gone to bed hungry hundreds of times and know very well what it's like to have the lights turned off and water discontinued for nonpayment of bills.

. . . that most of you are graduates of liberal arts colleges and have bachelor's degrees or higher—but some of you are products of teachers' colleges and may even be able to get jobs in your state with less than a four-year degree.

. . . that you may not academically have been in the top quarter of your class—but outstanding graduates of liberal arts colleges *are* going into teaching by the thousands, and they often regard the preparation and certification requirements as challenging as those demanded by engineering and other professions.

. . . that about half of you do not expect to be teaching five years from now, or have mixed feelings about the whole thing, very much like the man who watched his mother-in-law drive over a cliff in *his* new Cadillac—yet most of the male teachers on all levels do see some permanency in the field, and so do most of the women teachers on the secondary school level.

. . . that your beginning salary may be a little under \$4,000 a year—but it probably is higher if you are in a big city or teaching in the Far West, and lower if you're in some parts of the South.

. . . that this may be your first job—but, on the other hand, you may have already raised a family, fought a war (or two), held three or four other kinds of jobs, taught in one or more foreign countries, or been on the "community circuit" as hospital volunteer, Red Cross aid, YWCA member, symphony-guild subscriber, or leader in the League of Women Voters.

. . . that you may have chosen teaching because you come from a family of teachers and it seemed like the natural thing to do—but maybe it



was because one day you had a heart-to-heart talk with yourself and decided that in this relatively limited time on earth allotted to you, you should *do* something, *have* something of value to which you could look back in later years without feeling that your life was all a waste.

. . . that you may ultimately leave the profession because of marriage or more money available elsewhere—but there are other reasons why some of you may leave. Perhaps you are unable to get along with people (your co-workers, administrators, parents, or the children), or your own children need you at home. Perhaps the Pied Piper come-on of other jobs in Arizona, Florida, Alaska, Hawaii, or California, or the fact that this was just the wrong professional choice in the first place may influence you. The teacher "drop-out rate" sometimes resembles student school-leaving and divorce, actually starting before it began and being the "accumulation of the trivial."

So what does all of this add up to? Just this—that you're not a "type" but a composite of all that is great and mediocre in the American scene. You're as frivolous and unpredictable and imponderable as a spring snowstorm in the Middle West. You represent the best of modern education as well as the least worthy factors in it. You may have within you the excitement of youthful questing for answers even though you're in your forties or fifties, or you may represent the stodginess of all the ages and be in your early twenties.

You represent all of our political parties . . . social points of view . . . skin colors . . . peculiarities of worship on Sundays, Saturdays, weekdays, or no-days . . . and beliefs (or nonbelief) in the beauty of the individual child.

HAVE YOU READ THE FINE PRINT?

With all the variabilities you bring to teaching, you will be expected to conform sometimes to the needs of a "system" that varies from community to community as much as all of you do from classroom to classroom. What you've learned about the school in which you are now teaching was probably picked up in a short transition period, between your study and shopping-around-for-a-job days and today.

The "fine print" you read to orient yourself wasn't all in a contract either. It was there, all right, when it came to details like salary, sick leave, length of the school year, holidays, and also items you probably paid less attention to, like grievance procedures, tenure, and retirement. But it wasn't there as you read the details of your community, landlord, shopping district, local banker, and the teachers with whom you are working, read them in the very broadest sense through people's facial expres-

sions, descriptive phrases, innuendoes, and reactions.

Your answer to the "where are you going" part of the Williams cartoon mentioned a while back depends greatly on how thorough a task you did in matching yourself and your job. If you were slipshod the first time, the next chance may come pretty soon, and then there will be an opportunity to profit by your first mistake. Seldom do people lose or change jobs just because of incompetency; more frequently the reasons are in the realm of not getting along with others, not being able to adapt to the broader situation rather than to the job itself, not realizing the fringe problems.

Your beginning difficulties may be the result of failure to anticipate the problems inherent in a new job, home, and locality. Some of them are correctable only by moving on after your present contract expires, either to another teaching job or to a totally different field. But in most instances the correction is built in, waiting to be used to make *this* job all that you assumed it would be when you first signed your name with the superintendent's pen. In the next section we'll look at a number of the areas in which the new teacher can do his own correcting and adapting, where he can file some smoothness into his adjustment without filing away the rough (and desirable) edges of his own personality and his unique ideas.

You *are* expected to be an "incomplete teacher" when you start to teach, with the transition period of your last year of college continuing at least through your first year on the job. Many of our best teachers insist that even after long years they are *still* learning, adapting, listening, *still* experimenting, *still* failing to reach the ultimate in their skill and knowledge. They will laugh with you about the unrealistic expectations of a community that may sometimes act as though it expects you to have all of the following:

The education of a college president,
The executive ability of a financier,
The humility of a deacon,
The adaptability of a chameleon,
The hope of an optimist,
The courage of a hero,
The wisdom of a serpent,
The gentleness of a dove,
The patience of Job,
The grace of God, and
The persistence of the devil.

The "fine print" in either a contract or in people will tell you little about the most complicated mechanism of all—the child (multiplied by twenty, forty, or more) in your classroom. Your understanding of chil-

dren began in your undergraduate days and will continue in intensified form each day in your closer relationships with the children in your own classroom, as you watch them and listen to their problems, frustrations, and hopes for the future, as you realize that some of them seem impossible to understand, and for a very simple reason—because they are children in a time different from our own childhood.

It has sometimes been said that the movements of all the thousands of galaxies within galaxies since the dawn of time are not as complex as the intricate play, emotional, and work patterns of one child for one hour. That may sound extreme, but don't sell it short until you do watch, *really* watch, an active child in action!

SMOOTHING OUT THE BUMPS

Who you are and where you came from will bear some responsibility for the problems you now face, and probably set them up for you to overcome as surely as if they were meticulously and mechanically placed on a bowling alley. There they are—and all the preparation by way of college courses, community inquiries, and insight cannot possibly eliminate all of them.

But now that you *are* on the job and can put your finger on specific problems, perhaps we can identify and smooth out some of the rougher ones.

2

On Your Way

"10...9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1.....!"

The approach of that first day of teaching creeps up and seems to be over almost like the launching of our missiles and rockets; and the aftermath of the first day is sometimes as emotionally shattering as the impenetrable quiet that must follow for the planners as a missile fails to leave the launching pad.

Your questions and wonder after the first day are frequently the results of a new experience; they probably do not reflect in any way lack of preparation. Adequate preplanning, getting ready for the climax of those years of study, must imply flexibility. It is *not* the kind of planning where seat work is prepared in great detail (and quantity) for children you've never seen, *not* the kind where you've made up your mind so rigidly about what you intend to do that you're liable to be confused by the realities of the situation. "Flexibility" may make you uncomfortable, but it really can't be avoided when you're working with somewhat unpredictable young human beings.

In order to start out with a sense of well-being and security, you need information, a lot of information; and the first day of school is not the right time to get it. It's just too late. When you sign your contract, after you sign it, during the orientation week (or day)—those are the right times. But the old story is certainly true that you have to ask a good question to get a good answer; so let's set up a check list for you. Of course there'll be some items here that you don't care a bit about. Fine! Concentrate on the others. Satisfy yourself about them. Get the facts that are important to you.

The answers may come from an administrator, a supervisor, a teacher, or some printed or mimeographed material the school or school system puts out. Information probably will not come in accurate form from any other source. It *may*, of course, but the "they say" route is hardly the most dependable one for a trusting new teacher to use.

Although you obviously won't want to, or have to, ask all of these questions, you might use them as a guide to be certain that from *some*

dependable source you are accumulating all the data and details you need to help you glide into a smooth beginning. If you are scheduled for a conference with your principal, or another administrator, a few of these questions selectively chosen might help break the ice *and* give you important information.

QUESTIONS OF DIRECT CONCERN TO ME

Are there any basic school philosophies toward education, the community, school personnel, the children, or parents that I should know about?

What are some unique things about the community that will help me become oriented to it? Can I get a city or area map?

Is there a school directory and/or organization chart available to me?

A building chart that will show me the locations of administrative offices, the nurse, custodian's room, rest room (children's and teachers'), auditorium, gymnasium, supply room, bulletin board for notices, audiovisual room?

Does the school or system have a salary schedule, rules on tenure, retirement regulations?

When is pay day?

What kind of housing will be available for me? What will it cost?
Where is it located—how far from the school?

Is there any insurance available to me and my family through the school—hospitalization, life, retirement, accident?

Does the school have a credit union?

What are the provisions for sick leave, maternity leave, absence with and without pay?

Are there any specific requirements I should know about if I need a substitute?

Will I be able to participate in any in-service teachers' program?

What kinds of college or university courses are available to me in this vicinity?

What are the provisions in this state and district regarding certification and renewal of certification?

What are my teaching hours?

What time am I to be at school in the morning?

When am I able to leave?

What are my duties outside of the classroom? Are there any specific lunchroom, transportation, lavatory, and playground rules I should know about?

- Are there any special building policies related to food, smoking, after-school use of facilities?
- What are the dates of holidays and vacations? Is there a school calendar?
- What textbooks and supplementary books are available to me? What supplies and equipment? What art materials and games?
- How about the availability of audiovisual aids? Can I order films, film strips, slides, and pictures from school or other sources? If so, how—and when?
- Are any recommended guides or courses of study available?
- What community resources are available for our use?
- Are any written plans required of me for supervisory or administrative personnel? If so, when and in what form?
- How long in advance of the first day of school will I know where my room is? Will I have an opportunity to get it ready? What bulletin boards, desks, and tables will I have?
- Is there a professional library I can use in this building or in the system?
- How are teachers' assignments made to grades and schools in the system?
- QUESTIONS MORE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE CHILDREN**
- Which teacher(s) had my children last year? When will I be able to speak to her (or them)?
- Will I see cumulative or other records of the children before school starts? How long in advance of the beginning of school can I see them?
- What is the school's testing program? What tests? When administered? By whom?
- Who are the special personnel available in this school or district: special teachers, and services, like psychological or guidance personnel, nurse, physician, people in the exceptional-child areas of hearing, sight, speech, mental retardation, orthopedic handicaps, and miscellaneous physical handicaps?
- Are there any special practices or procedures now being used, or contemplated, in connection with gifted children?
- What are the regulations for absences and excusing students early? For fire and air-raid drills? For homework? For promotion and retention? For corrective discipline?

What are the bell arrangements for fire and air-raid drills, and also for the start of school, recess, lunch, and dismissal? What are the specific entry and dismissal rules?

Are there any prescribed opening exercises?

What are the forms, and how are they to be filled out, regarding

attendance—daily, monthly, semester, annual;

pupil progress;

cumulative folders;

accidents;

transfers;

collections;

field trips;

and also some of the forms not specifically related to children,

like inventories, and requisitions for supplies and books?

You'll learn the rules. They'll be clear enough. But it may take a little time to know *how* and *when* to bend them. It may take a little more security in your new job, too. You certainly don't want to be the kind of teacher who is so rigid in his daily planning and so satisfied with his own perfection that he covers his bulletin boards and their materials each June, uncovers them each September, and keeps them clean—but more yellow all the time!

Regulations, as well as all other practices related to your classroom, call for understanding, for knowing the reasons why, and for being able to accept those reasons. Blind obedience was a trait of the army the Nazis built, but quiet consideration, adjustment, and full comprehension are more nearly the characteristics of teachers in a democracy.

Being able to interpret the intent of those who make or write a statement is as important as hearing it in the first place. If we do not have semantic knowledge of what lies behind words, we can sometimes arrive at strange conclusions. Interpreting what is meant is the important part. Applying your intelligence and understanding to the mere words is the contribution called for from every teacher.

THE FIRST DAY

With all the planning, all the questions, all the concern and worry, the first day itself may still not run as smoothly as you hope it will. No one can tell you exactly what you should do on this day, for several obvious reasons. It will depend on the grade level you're teaching, the specific things you've been able to find out in advance about the children, and your own preparation and personality. It will also depend on any specific first-day requirements of your school.

Anyone who insists on giving you the advice that *all* beginning teachers should do this or that the first day is bound to be wrong. However, from the suggestions that follow you may want to *select* and *adapt* those that seem to suit you and your situation best.

You have a name, and so does each child; you're not going to establish a close, workable relationship unless fairly soon you have each other's names down pat. And what you notice about each child personally may cement in your mind what you've already found out from the cumulative folders.

A room that has interest centers based on books, animals, records, science, travel, number concepts, plants, and the neighborhood of the broader community, with each center adapted to the level of the children, will provide activities and ideas to fill the gaps not only during the first day but also in the days to follow.

Efforts may be made to capitalize on what the children bring to school with them, whether they are tangible possessions, or intangible problems, questions, or thoughts, giving life to the educational cliché of "taking the child where he is."

You might want to capitalize on where he's *been*, but varying the tired old theme of "what I did during the summer." Perhaps as a new teacher you're not yet weary of that hackneyed assignment, but you *will* be, and the children probably already are if they've reached the fourth or fifth grade.

Specific plans for the day might make you more comfortable, if you base your plans on where the children were in the academic areas last spring, realizing that three months is a long time and a lot can be forgotten during the summer. Review of spring material may be appropriate for more than the first day, perhaps for the first month; however, not for *all* the children. Here's where the theory of individual differences and needs enters in a practical way.

Be prepared to vary the pace, the subject, and the techniques you use; and the younger the children are, the more you ought to do so. Being ready for individual, small-group, and full-class activities will help out. So will the stories (to read and to tell), songs, records, hobbies, and games that you've accumulated for years.

You're generally better off (for the day *and* the career) if you give the impression that you're off to a brisk start, that you're settling down, that you know what you're doing, but that you're still able to shift fast if the situation calls for a change, and that you enjoy and profit from listening as well as speaking.

Despite the fact that you at least partially prepared the room for the children, you may want to involve them in the dressing up of what is to be their second home too. This planning with them can include not only room arrangements but also committees, care of supplies and materials, and some of the rules and regulations related to fire and air-raid drills, the lunchroom, the playground, safety, recess, and school hours and schedule.

If you make a decision in advance to be either "tough" or "a real guy," you're liable to have made a mistake if either characteristic is foreign to your own personality. The teaching situation calls for certain characteristics that all of us share in varying degrees—firmness, warmth, humor, humility. It calls for being able to listen and observe and adapt. And it demands that we remain true to the personality we have and the basic respect toward the other human beings without which no one in the field of teaching can succeed.

All of these factors should permeate that first day. Most of them will be a part of every day.

Although the first day may end for the children at three, so much the better; you have your initial chance to make entries in your records. Before you leave to fall flat on your bed in exhaustion or to share the most exciting day you've ever had with your wife, roommate, or the fellow next door, be sure that you've done those records correctly. It'll be a lot easier during all the teaching tomorrows if the first day is accurately recorded.

The activities of the first day, both within and outside the classroom, may extend into a few weeks, to activities which include testing for determining achievement levels and other data; to special meetings or workshops arranged by buildings, grades, or subjects; to committees in which you'll be invited to participate; to arrangements for cross-visitation of teachers; to social events to help you feel at home and one of the "old boys" within the school, school district, and community. And during all of this you'll have your ups and downs, feelings that it's all wonderful or pretty terrible—normal reactions to a totally new experience for which no amount of reading, listening, and asking can fully prepare you.

"AT HOLLOW JUNCTION COLLEGE WE DID IT THIS WAY!"

A conservative is sometimes defined as a person who doesn't want to try anything new for the *first* time; and yet your first year of teaching is hardly the best time for alerting everyone to the superior methods you're so eager to share with them. Despite the fact that your methods *may* be superior, and that all you've seen so far in the classrooms into which you've peeked seems to date back to the "year one," it might be a good idea to pack away the soapbox for a short while anyway.

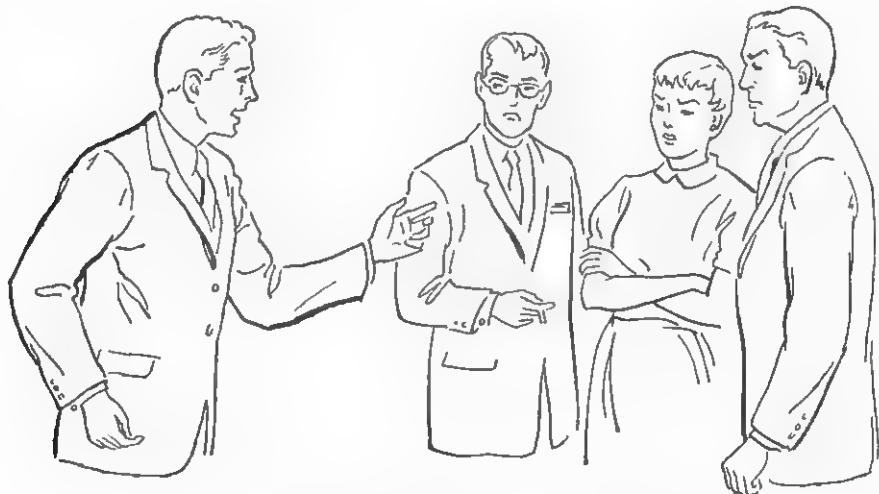
Accepting (at least temporarily) the school, the teachers, and the

experience they represent may pay dividends. Perhaps it seems to you that nothing has changed since you were in elementary school, and what's even worse is your belief that you'll be unable to teach as you want to. But maybe you're wrong on both counts, as you'll probably find out if you give others a chance to show you that they haven't been sitting around doing nothing all the years you were getting an education.

As you tighten relationships, practice the listening routine, and get to know your own youngsters, you'll no doubt find that experimentation on your part, and the desire of others to learn from you, will gradually develop. Acceptance in a school is a gradual process, seldom nurtured by perpetual talk, by ridicule of others, by impatience, or by the belief that you are not appreciated.

Disappointment can be a two-way street, because the expectations of the experienced teachers also may be high. They may be surprised at *your* reluctance to adapt a little bit, at your conviction that all your learning has already been done. They may have kept up with developments even more than you have, may still be taking courses and reading the research, and have a broad background of experience into which to fit all they are finding out.

They may even be a little miffed because you come right in and have a great deal to say about the records (on which they've worked for years), the courses of study (in whose preparation they were proud to have par-



ticipated), and the school regulations (set up by their committees). They like you, all right, especially your friendliness and fresh approach to things, but they may feel, "Can't he wait just a little before he tries to tear down or change all we've done?"

Just as you may wonder why an old course of study has to be recommended for your use, they may wonder why, after they've worked for years to get the desks detached from the floor, you arrange them in firm, unchangeable rows.

"DOES MY SLIP SHOW?"

In many of your undergraduate courses you heard about characteristics of the good teacher, and also about his actions and appearance and the techniques of self-analysis. But how seriously, *really* seriously, did you take the hints? Like death and auto accidents, it's always the other fellow whom we're talking about—until the situation hits home.

So for a few moments let's put you on the pedestal for careful, personalized observation. Let's ask a few questions, and answer them honestly. You don't need psychiatric help; you can do this yourself, if you face up to the facts of what you are, look like, and sound like. Let's start out with the last factor.

What *do* I sound like? Do I really know? Have I listened to myself on a good tape recording? Did I like what I heard? Did I do something about what I didn't like?

Do I have any nervous little mannerisms that will distract from the learning situation? Am I a hair puller, eyebrow smoother, nail biter, posture slumper, chin rubber, hand wringer, eye blinker, floor pacer, lip wetter, nose stroker, forehead wrinkler, knuckle cracker, ear stretcher? Can I put my finger on my own mannerisms? Can I control them?

Are my clothes deliberately drab or flashy, or do I attempt to choose clothing based on variety, current style, comfort, color blending, and appropriateness for the classroom situation? Do I seek the role of the non-conformist in clothing; that is, am I being different just for difference's sake, to stand out, to be looked at, or are good taste and adaptability to my job more on my mind?

Do cleanliness and good grooming of hair, nails, make-up, shaving, clean and pressed clothes occur to me not only when I dress in the morning but during the day as well? Owning only one comb and having it at home won't do the job. Even less is deliberate sloppiness on the part of either sex a characteristic to be cultivated.

Do I use certain words or phrases, particularly current slang, repetitiously, or do I try to use correct, varied, and imaginative language?

Do I get a false kind of pride from just barely getting to school on time, rushing in breathlessly at the last minute, or is setting the example of punctuality, preplanning, and thoughtfulness regarding my job important

to me as part of what I am trying to teach children?

Are my own habits of forgetfulness, envy, worry, moodiness, temperament as it displays itself in undue optimism or pessimism, or poor manners so close to the surface that they are liable to rub off on my children? Or have I attempted to eliminate or submerge them so that they don't interfere with my teaching? What's even more important, however, is this: Do I recognize that I *have* these habits in the first place?

Have I realized what is the most important half hour of the school day, from the point of view of seeing to it that it *is* a good day? Do I know that the "melting process" of the first half hour in the morning will frequently determine whether from our varied early-morning starts, confusion, and problems at home we can adjust to the routine and exciting school experiences of this school day?

Our "slip" can show on the basis of something other than sight, sound, and habit too. An interesting little study of a few years ago will no doubt get the point across. A group of college students was presented with a long list of nationalities and asked to arrange them in negative order on the basis of two factors: whom they would least like to live next door to and whom they would least like to have marry into their families. Very high among the "least-wanted" nationalities were some like the Ratherians and the Slavunians, two completely nonexistent groups! The memorable, plaintive little song of Lt. Cable in *South Pacific* comes to mind as we realize that "you've gotta be taught" to love and hate, and that it has to be dinned in your thin little ear "from the time you are six or seven or eight."

As we think about this idea which so closely affects the children we teach, let's do our best to be realistic, to recognize that, unfortunate as it is, most of us do reach adulthood with prejudices that we find very difficult to control. They may be prejudices based on whether a child is clean, what language he uses, how often he blows his nose, whether the child is a boy or girl, and what his hobbies are; or they may be related to race, religion, and nationality. And they may be attitudes for as well as against.

Although it is human and understandable for one to have likes and dislikes, teachers are in a special role. Their task is to help educate *every* child exposed to them up to his absolute capacity. Our feeling about timidity or boisterousness or recalcitrance in *these* children, and the eye slant or skin color in *those* children, are frequently obstructions to the learning process. Ignoring and ridiculing are obvious expressions of rejection, but the less obvious indications come in frequent animated conversation with this one, and one-syllable reactions to that one; your arm around the shoulder of the first, and a won't-touch-with-a-ten-foot-pole attitude toward the second.

They know you as you are. They see your seemingly hidden attitudes, see them fully exposed to the light of day. The least you can do is recognize your own feelings; the most is to alter or eliminate them. It isn't easy, but is it fair to the children not even to try?

Fortunately, there are additional demands on us as teachers. Our affection for teaching has to extend to working with all kinds of children, and if we don't learn this fact before we start teaching it must have a top priority for our in-service education.

"All kinds of children" is not limited to those already referred to in the prejudices listed above. There is a strong trend in our country to try to absorb into our regular classrooms some of those who cannot hear or see well (perhaps cannot hear or see at all). The stipulation, of course, is that they and the other children can adapt to and profit from this situation. Frequently the school will add a teaching specialist to help out by teaching the special skills these children need. In a seeing and hearing world, and in an age where we must learn to live with those who have differences (at the same time recognizing that *each* of us has some), this educational trend makes good sense. It is extending into other handicap categories when both financially and educationally feasible. As a new teacher you must be alert to practical implications of what "recognition of individual differences" really means. It isn't just so much educational gobbledegook!

This business of seeing and knowing yourself as you actually are also calls for the inner security to laugh at your mistakes as well as to accept those of the children. It calls for the realization that your sarcasm may be just a means of hiding some inferiority you feel; your resentment of a very bright child in your class, for example, probably arises from your not quite facing up to the fact that there will almost always be children in your classes who are smarter than you are. Hard as they are to accept, these too are the facts of life!

But you are not the only one with these problems. Others have them too. Some even solve them alone. If you can't do so by yourself, there are people around to help out. Let's see who a few of them are.

3

No Man Is an Island

In her wonderful little book, *The Arts in the Classroom*, Natalie Cole says, "When children are engaged in what they love to do, the barriers are down. The teacher has access to the child within." She goes on to talk about freeing children from fears and tensions, building up faith and confidence, enriching experiences, and taking care of mechanics so that spontaneity doesn't suffer. And then she proceeds to demonstrate how it can be done.

What may seem to be obvious and easy for an experienced teacher frequently comes only through laborious and intricate channels for the newcomer. However, because help is available just for the asking, the task that appears so difficult in anticipation takes on manageable dimensions. Even the goals Mrs. Cole so eloquently sets up seem completely attainable within the framework of one's background, abilities, and current teaching setting.

Perhaps all of the following sources aren't available to you, but some of them are, and now is the time to take stock of them. Identifying them, cementing your relationships with them, realizing what they can do for you and you for them—it's never too early to begin cataloguing the possibilities:

The administrative staff

Superintendent's office

Principal's office

Assistants in both places

The school board

And—the very important secretaries and other administrative office personnel

Supervisors

Grade-level supervisors

Subject-area supervisors

Helping teachers

Those assigned to work with new teachers

Those assigned to work in particular problem areas

Consultants and special teachers

- Art
- Music
- Home economics
- Physical education
- Industrial arts
- Academic fields
- Exceptional children

Special services

- Psychological services
- Reading clinic
- Audiovisual aids
- Radio-television
- Social workers
- Home visitors
- Librarians
- Medical and nursing services
- Guidance counselors

Co-workers on the teaching staff

Other school employees

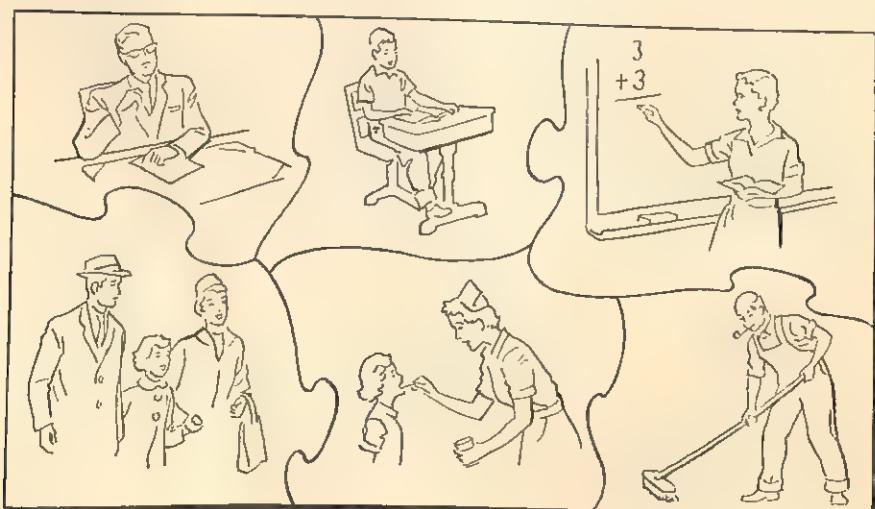
- Custodial staff
- Adult safety patrol
- Transportation

The children themselves

Their parents

People in the community

Others, known to you as you start looking around your school and community



All of these people may not agree on the best way of getting the school they want, but their goals are strikingly similar, even the goals of the children, the more mature pupils being quite outspoken in their demand for a sound education from competent and professional teachers and administrators.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

We could spend a lot of time arguing the point of who is on "top"—the superintendent, the school board, the people themselves, and so on, but the real question is something like this: To whom are *you* responsible? Who sends you directives, evaluates your work, approves your request for a leave or for books and supplies?

Although your answers may vary from situation to situation, it's vital that you know who it is, for the smooth running of any classroom depends on a teacher who (1) knows the channel for getting something done and (2) has established a good working relationship with the people in that channel.

Generally your school principal is the most important person to you in the administrative setup. In a small system you may have many contacts with the superintendent, but more frequently the principal is the person most directly concerned in helping you do your job well. It would be a rarity if a person in that position did not understand just about every difficulty you encounter as you adjust to the role of the teacher. Having been a teacher himself and knowing many others who have gone through the initial problems, he usually can see things as you see them and will welcome your questions (and suggestions too, but perhaps more so *after* you've been teaching a little while!).

He may visit your class at intervals, and your reaction will depend entirely on the relationship you've established with each other. Those visits can be friendly, informal, and helpful. Or they may be tension-provoking and disruptive. Until you know otherwise, why not assume they'll be in the former category? When one occurs, just go on with your program without quick shifts or fancy adjustments. Continue to feel that the children come first, and proceed as you were.

Just as your children at school, and in your own family as well, study you almost as much as they seem to study their subject or the broader home situation, so will it pay you to know something about your administrative head. Of what does he most approve educationally? What are his educational pet peeves? What is his professional background? It may do no harm at all to find out, as you go along, what his hobbies are, what family members he has, and the professional organizations and publications that are part of his career. No deliberate effort need be made to pick up these details; you may accumulate them effortlessly. The objective

Acc. No.....



in mentioning them is to alert you to a possibility that may aid you in getting help toward doing the best job you possibly can.

Personalities of school administrators obviously differ as much as do the personalities of people in any occupation. Their ideas may come to you in clear-cut, specific directives, in more general written or oral statements, or in indirect suggestions handed out through intermediaries. In whatever form they reach you it's just as important for you to get the message as it was for the future bride of a young Texas rancher in a classic little story. He'd met her in New York, proposed by mail, and picked her up at the Dallas airport in a horse-drawn carriage, with three horses, in fact. On the way out to the ranch one of the horses balked; so the man jumped down, strolled up to him, and warned, "Now, that's once." Returning to the carriage, they started again, and once more the horse balked, so the admonishment was repeated with, "Now that's twice." It happened again; the rancher jumped down, shook his finger at the horse, saying, "Now that's three times," took out his pistol, and shot him dead. Of course the New York girl was horrified. When her husband-to-be climbed back in, she said, "Honey, I wouldn't have done that if I were you." Sternly he turned to her and replied, "Now, dear, that's once!"

Let's hope your relationship with an administrator doesn't have potentialities close to such a drastic outcome (you'll have to admit that you've seldom heard of school developments of that extreme nature!). But, seriously, don't you think you can take a hint when an idea or suggestion comes to you directly or indirectly? You may want to discuss its practicality or wisdom, but that's something else; the factor pinpointed here is to recognize the administrator's position and responsibility, and to help him do the job *he's* assigned to do just as he's attempting to help you do yours.

S.O.S.

The various titles, functions, and services of supervisors, consultants, and helping teachers will depend largely on funds available for such assistance and on the basic school philosophy toward auxiliary personnel aids to the teaching staff. The trend is toward more help, more understanding of the bigger job teachers face these days, and more awareness of how to keep supervision and service free from the administrative tasks of ratings, salaries, and promotions.

From one or more of the persons mentioned earlier will come the experienced shoulder to lean on when you're upset by an assignment that nobody else wants, the heavy load of reports and records, a teacher clique or talecarrier or chronic griper, or a scanty pay check that won't quite

cover a new suit or dress (or food for the next fourteen days). Perhaps by title you'll locate the person who can help carry burdens, but it isn't at all unusual for the librarian or nurse or bus driver or physical education teacher to be the trouble sharer; you can sometimes simply count on a receptive personality rather than on a descriptive job title.

There is seldom a reason for brooding alone either over dry sandwiches for lunch because there isn't a clean restaurant available or over time-consuming collections from the children that overlap and interrupt your teaching. The least you can do is be miserable *with* somebody. The most is to arrive at a cooperative solution. You have at least a fighting chance to do the latter if you join up with one or more who are in a position to help you clarify the difficulty and seek an answer. A Johnny-come-lately all alone can seldom solve the problem as well or as fast.

Another note or two is appropriate about the job of the supervisor. It is *not* to stand in judgment, find fault, criticize destructively, or lead to a "war" based on a personality conflict or a professional difference of opinion. The job *does* have the same objective that every good administrator and teacher shares—to see that the best teaching and learning are done, and to use the techniques of cooperation and understanding to reach this goal. Taking suggestions in the spirit in which they are offered (and let's hope you're lucky enough to find that spirit one of friendly persuasion and helpfulness) is vital for you, despite any warnings or fears that may have been instilled in you in advance. Just as you may run into a principal who long ago forgot the problems in the classroom, you may be saddled with a supervisor equally oblivious to your difficulties, but the odds are on your side.

THE LADY DOWN THE HALL AND THE MAN IN THE BASEMENT

Your major confidant may not be on the supervisory level at all, but among the teachers with whom you have most things in common, or among the other school employees who offer assistance in many directions. If you like to square-dance, and there's another teacher who likes this pastime, why not enjoy it together? If you occasionally like to get a quick smoke during a free recess period, and the custodian's or engineer's room is the closest place where smoking is permitted, then your learning of school rules and routines may take place in that receptive environment, with a hot cup of coffee from the perpetually heating coffee pot tossed in for good measure.

As was mentioned earlier, the main reason for losing one job or not liking another job may have nothing at all to do with competence; there's more of a chance that it will result from not getting along with people. So what are a few of the hints for being liked and wanted and needed? One

thing is certainly true—they do *not* include sticky subservience or indiscriminate copying.

One group of persons found out, to their embarrassment, how ridiculous it is to follow the leader without reasoning the situation through. The incident is supposed to have taken place when Calvin Coolidge was President, when he gave a state dinner with guests who had never been to the White House before. They decided to follow his lead through dinner; so when he poured coffee into his saucer, although they began to wonder, they did the same. Then he added cream; so they did too. But what stunned them was to see him put the saucer on the floor for the cat!

A sound substitute for foolish imitation would be a blending of the following characteristics:

Willingness to talk more than "shop." Hobbies, movies, clothes, vacations, and anything else in which you're interested are appropriate; betraying a child's confidence, adding to school or community gossip, or expressing concern about already formed teachers' cliques are better left untouched.

Willingness to ask for help if you really want it or need it. You will probably flatter the person you consult, but not if your questions are in the realm of what they used to (and may still) refer to in the Army as "sharp-shooting," tossing out questions merely to impress an instructor or audience.

Knowledge of how to request assistance of the engineering or custodial staff. A little common sense will tell you that the least effective way of getting heat in the room when you need it, of seeing that waste baskets are emptied, that windows shine, that lights light, and that shades draw is to give orders, demand service, or attempt to command unreasonable speed. Just try it, and see how far you'll get!

Ability to express interest without being competitive, to show eagerness to learn without undue aggressiveness, to be friendly without clinging to the person who says the first kind word. The middle ground between "going it alone" and tapping the rich human resources in the school is a sensible choice.

A few pitfalls are possible in your relationships with experienced teachers, however. Such difficulties may originate from factors like the experienced teacher's feeling threatened because children sometimes confide in you, the newer teachers, more readily, or from resentment because of your youth and your starry-eyed dreams regarding our profession, or from concern over the easier adjustments you have made, when memory

tells them their own were unforgettably rough. You may have to discount their tagging a child as "bad," or "unmanageable," or "disagreeable" as you seek the reasons *behind* the labels, and they may not like your dismissing their "analysis." They may not approve of your referring to their contemplated field visit to a planetarium or zoo or museum as "fun," when they view it as a strict "learning experience" with no relationship to enjoyment. Or they may not like your picking up an overwhelming interest in planets and satellites when the course of study "specifically states we will study them in my grade, *not* in yours."

But don't let these problems bother you too much. For each experienced teacher of the types just mentioned you'll find at least ten who seem to attract children as bees attract honey, who welcome your dreams and plans for teaching, who smile warmly over the ease with which you're adjusting, and who seek with you the answers behind what makes Jimmy such a terror in the classroom. Whatever traits you as a group have, they have too, except perhaps theirs are a little mellowed or accentuated by time.

THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES

Sometimes we become so lost in thinking about ourselves that we forget the children, the real reason for it all, and the help we can get from them. As almost any parent of a teen-ager will tell you, it's practically impossible to see things through the eyes of children. Because our own childhood was so long ago, we can't recall it exactly, and even if we could, we should profit little, for children of 1960 are far different from those of 1940, 1930, or 1920. And, now, at different ages, we don't share the same problems. Ours are so frequently concerned with money, jobs, sickness, or death, whereas those of children (just as crucial to them) are concerned with being left out, talked about, ignored, or teased.

The solution of many of your teaching problems is built right into the sources of the problems. But solutions demand understanding. The ability to delve into what makes children act as they do *may* come through child-development courses and textbooks, but it can come even more readily through the avalanche of books and stories that show us children as they really are. (Of course, live observation and listening are best of all, but perhaps they are too obvious a source of information for some of us to use!)

So have a wonderful time with some of the following, and you'll be the richer for it:

The Happy Time, by Robert Fontaine
Please Don't Eat the Daisies, by Jean Kerr

A Hole Is to Dig, by Ruth Krauss

Kids Say the Darndest Things, by Art Linkletter

Of Human Bondage (earlier sections, when Philip was a boy), by W. Somerset Maugham

A Handy Guide to Grownups, by Jennifer Owsley

Our Miss Boo, by Margaret Lee Runbeck

Write Me a Poem, Baby, by H. Allen Smith

Where Did You Go? Out. What Did You Do? Nothing, by Robert Paul Smith

A child's sense of humor, his slang, and his interests obviously call for current, almost day-by-day adjustments. However, you can't generalize about children. From an unusual source (Danny Kaye) came a good piece of advice: ". . . you can't bring health and happiness to a million children by signing a paper or waving a wand. It has to be done child by child."

These individual needs are on the conscience and minds of teachers every day, and it won't take long for you to feel them, and to realize how necessary it is to make every human effort to see and understand the world through the eyes of children. The specifics of this task include learning how to interpret, use, and add to cumulative records, to analyze the meanings behind IQ and other test scores, and to recognize the symptoms of illness. They mean realizing, on the one hand, that a "slow learner" can be a very bright child who is only working up to his grade level and, on the other hand, the term can apply to a borderline mentally retarded child who is achieving to the limits of his ability, that individual attention applies to the kindergarten child who *can* read, as well as to the sixth grader who *can't*.

Working with children as distinct personalities means the development of techniques too, techniques for meeting the needs of one child without neglecting the rest, of moving around the room to fulfill the guidance function in its best sense, and of seating the children so that needs based on size, vision, and hearing are all met. We know now how great is the responsibility of the regular classroom teacher for identifying children who differ from the so-called normal, and for adapting the program to them or referring such exceptional children to specialists if the school or school system has them.

Your responsibility was aptly stated by Jane Addams, who once said that "the mature of each generation run a grave risk of putting their efforts in a futile direction . . . unless they can keep in touch with the youth of their own day and know at least the trend in which eager dreams are driving them. . . ."

THE CLOSEST RELATIVES

In one of the better education films, the one many of you have seen, about Ada Adams, her teacher visits the home and is greeted in a rather chilly manner by Ada's mother, who asks something like this, "What's she done wrong now?" Suspicion and fear have frequently been the undergirding of home-school relations, buttressed by the parent's and the teacher's lack of insight regarding each other's objectives.

Now we more frequently realize that we're all in this educational endeavor together, and that if we pool our information and energy we're more certain of doing a better job of educating our children. The intimate knowledge of the parents (despite its apparent bias) is as important as the technical skill of the teacher, fitting together as closely as the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

We are finding out that the parents who visit their children's school and participate in its activities know more about what it is attempting to do, recognize its problems, and appreciate the accomplishments of its teachers. It works out just as well in the other direction, too, in providing for the teachers the reasons why Tim has such a small attention span or why Nancy clings to the teacher seeking affection.

Getting acquainted, being friendly, listening, sharing problems—don't these suggestions apply equally to both sides? Details regarding early childhood diseases or operations may help the teacher, and general information regarding intelligence and achievement can help parents fulfill the function they want so much to fulfill well. And just as you should make inquiry regarding the convenience of a home visit to the parents, so should the evenings you look forward to be free of lengthy telephone calls from them to your home. It's just as much a shame that you should have an "unlisted telephone" because of excessive calls to you as that the parents should wish you didn't have their address because of your unannounced visits.

Obviously, you'll have to find time for parents, during or after school hours, at your convenience and theirs. Parent conferences, PTA meetings, and home visitations may be part of the answer. Your school may already have satisfactory arrangements, but if it doesn't, telling it of this need will encourage it to set them up as time goes on.

Your attitude toward the parents of your children may reflect your feelings about the children themselves. Those feelings might be illustrated by the man who, seeing two experimenting boys walking on his newly laid sidewalk, said, "Yes, I do like children, but in the abstract, not in the concrete."

Or perhaps these words of a teacher, written to parents, are closer to how you feel, and closer to how you will act toward parents during your

first year of teaching as well as during the many years to follow:

"I thank you for lending me your little child today. All the years of love and care and training which you have given him have stood him in good stead in his work and in his play. I sent him home to you tonight, I hope a little stronger, a little taller, a little freer, a little nearer his goal. Lend him to me again tomorrow, I pray you. In my care of him I shall show my gratitude."

THE PARTY LINE AND THE CORNER DRUGSTORE

All the people we have mentioned so far are part of the community, but there are others, too, and they're going to be interested in you. Their attitudes will be just like those of various persons (engineer, artist, farmer, and honeymooner) who look at Niagara Falls and think different thoughts. Here the taxpayer will see your salary, the church member another member, the grocer a new customer, the young men or women a new prospect for dating, the newspaper a new subscriber. To many you'll be only a statistic, but a vital one.

You are a public-relations person for education in general and specifically for your school. The way you talk, dress, and act will reflect on both. Although it may be unfair for a community to expect, as especially the smaller communities do, different standards for its teachers than for its barbers, druggists, or beauticians, this is frequently the case and a fact to face.

A great deal of unpleasantness can be avoided if you know something about the community before you go into it. If a moderate amount of smoking and drinking are important to you, and the community turns thumbs down on one or both, doesn't that give you a hint about your future happiness there? If you like to dance, go to shows, visit art galleries, and the nearest opportunities are 218 miles away, what does that tell you? If it's a church-going community and you couldn't care less, or if your religion isn't even represented in the town, isn't that a guide toward whether or not you should sign the contract?

Climate, the smile of the principal, and salary aren't the only considerations. There are others, and they're important.

Because teachers work with the community's proudest possession, its children, they are sometimes watched rather closely. What you say may be magnified in importance, and your activities take on proportions not elsewhere observed. So what does that mean to you? Simply this: after you know what the community likes and dislikes, make up your mind either to adjust or to leave. One person put it this way, "Get happy or get out." And yet most communities don't require the kind of conforming that creates a problem. Let's just hope that those of you who like to rebel

a little bit have teaching jobs in areas that encourage or at least tolerate nonconformists.

However, in most places the tendency to talk too much about your children, their parents, and other teachers, to socialize indiscriminately, and to criticize without being careful who is listening may be a mistake. It's like knowing how to spell "banana" but not knowing when to stop, not being sensitive to the threshold of a community's tolerance and acceptance.

You may even feel that such communities are entirely "too personal." But that's their prerogative, perhaps, because it's their money, their school, and their children.

The people in the community will usually help more than hinder, however. They want you to be part of them, join their activities, share their interests. And if you do, before long you'll no doubt find that they view you no differently than they do the other young people of the community, just a fellow or girl who wants to do a job, have friends, and be liked.

A WORD BEFORE WE MOVE ON

So maybe now you'll agree that no man (or woman) in teaching is a lonely island. The bolstering-up can come from many directions if you'll only look or ask or be at all receptive to the helping hands that are out toward you, eagerly hoping you'll let them assist whenever the going gets rough.

In this section we've been more restrictive than you may have imagined, for outside your school and community settings there are many other sources to give you a boost when it is needed.

Now let's spend some time with a few of them.

4

Moving Along

Just as it is with each course, lecture, or conversation, so it is with your entire college career: the best begins when it ends. That's when the most productive thinking, reacting, and doing can take place. That is when you feel you finally have the chance to put into practice all the preparation you've accumulated, when action can replace contemplation, when meaning can accompany intention as you finish the statement, "Now, when *I* start to teach"

The biggest mistake that some new teachers make is to assume that all has been done—all the studying, reading, research, writing. It's entirely in the past. Now they can *teach*. Now they can dip into the reservoir of knowledge. But such a comfortable thought makes things too pat, too easy. Because teaching is a profession, and teachers want to be paid professional earnings, many responsibilities are piled up and waiting for each newcomer.

If you think that's asking too much of you, give a little thought to the doctor, dentist, and lawyer. Would you entrust your health, dental work, or legal business to one who doesn't keep up with developments in his field, who neglects to apply to your situation the very latest research and interpretations? If you have a child, do you want to entrust his life to a pediatrician who last opened a medical book or journal when he was in medical school?

Of course not. It's so obvious what we expect of other professional people, and yet it's equally obvious that those of us who think of teaching as the end of the line or a stopgap or a soft touch are on the wrong track. It won't, and can't, be any of those things, not in a country where, on the one hand, education of all to the maximum of their abilities has been a foundation stone of our national philosophy, and, on the other hand, neglect of our gifted students has seemed almost a deliberate evasion of social and community responsibility.

So what are some of the approaches that will help make you even more proud of your profession than you already are? What should you do to become very sure that you don't fall into a rut (which someone recently defined as an open-ended grave and another wisecracked about

by saying, "Pick your rut well. You'll be in it for the next twenty-five years!").

What should you do to be sure you play fair both with the children you teach and yourself?

WANT TO BE A JOINER?

Perhaps you've always prided yourself on not joining an organization unless you could be active in it, and perhaps that was either a laudable objective or an excuse. Now you have available to you a vast array of organizations that are directly or partially related to your profession, plus many others in your community that might attract you.

There is, of course, no necessity for restricting your activities to groups in the field of education. In fact, some of your best "missionary work" can be done by participating in groups outside our field, letting them know that we *do* work hard, just as they do, that we are *not* in an ivory tower, and that we *have* dreams, ambitions, fears, laughs, and desires similar to theirs. If you think "missionary work" is a pretty strong way of putting it, reserve judgment a little while until you listen to some of the misunderstandings and nonunderstandings you'll encounter as you go along—some apologetically stated, some inadvertently uttered, some blatantly blurted out.

On the basis of your own needs you'll easily discover organizations of a community nature. The groups may be of a social, religious, theatrical, or other artistic nature, based on a "cause" or just the desire to get together, consisting of persons of various ages or limited to a narrowly defined age level. Although you may join as a "teacher," you'll no doubt be accepted as a "person," and that's when you begin to do your profession some real good. Keep that objective on an incidental level, however. Just have a good time, and the rest will take care of itself.

In the organizational possibilities of a professional type, the list is equally long, equally diverse in interests and objectives. Organizations are local, national, or international in scope. You may find one in your teaching area of English, social studies, mathematics, or other field that is just right for you. Or perhaps one of the many directed toward the elementary school level will serve your purpose better. Or maybe more than one will attract you.

Classroom teachers are the backbone of many of these organizations, as their publications indicate so well. The publications (some of which will be listed below) are frequently the main reason for your wanting to be part of the organization, although attending the national and regional conferences is another fine way of keeping up with the latest developments in your area of interest. Getting time off and money to cover expenses are

something else again, however.

A sample list of associations in which you may be interested is given here, admittedly incomplete, and subject to numerous supplementary suggestions from the many persons we've already mentioned who can help keep you from being "a lonely island."

Association for Childhood Education International,

1200 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Washington 5, D.C.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development,

1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

Council for Exceptional Children,

1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

International Reading Association,

5835 Kimbark Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois

National Congress of Parents and Teachers,

700 North Rush Street, Chicago 11, Illinois

National Education Association,

1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C. (and your state and local Education Associations)

National Society for the Study of Education,

5835 Kimbark Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois

You can join and be active, or join and be passive—or just not be counted among the members of one or more organizations of this type. It's easy to stay out, of course. But, on the other hand, it's also easy to become stagnant in one's job!

A LITTLE BIT OF READING

If all the pages of all the pamphlets, books, and magazines in your chosen profession were laid side by side, not a bit of greenery or water or desert or mountain would peek through. We're a very prolific group of which you're becoming a part; and perhaps you'll be making your contribution to the published materials of our field before too long a time has passed.

Your undergraduate classes may have made you feel that perhaps there was an overabundance of publications (and it would no doubt have been the same if you had been in business administration, engineering, advertising, history, or the physical or biological sciences). Maybe you felt (as you also would have felt had you been in most any other field) that a publishing moratorium by some of the journals would be welcomed by both readers *and* staff, that some means should be found to eliminate repetition.

During your undergraduate days assigned reading in some of the professional journals may have built up an "anti" feeling on your part, a

conviction that all this published material adds up to very little. Take a rest from it during the beginning months of your teaching, but afterward give it another chance. Others have done just that after feeling as strongly as perhaps you do, and somehow, in what seems almost a miraculous way, the articles take on new meaning and vitality. They haven't changed very much, but something—or someone—did. The techniques, materials, insights, philosophy, or ideas they represent now fall on receptive minds.

You may subscribe to one or more, or locate them in a nearby college, university, or public library. They're good company for you as a new teacher, because they provide consolation as you face decisions and seek answers for recurrent daily climaxes in your classroom.

Here are a few which teachers find valuable, and there are dozens of others:

Child Study
Childhood Education
Children
Clearing House
Educational Leadership
Educational Review
Elementary English
Elementary School Journal
Exceptional Children
Grade Teacher
Instructor
Journal of Educational Research
National Parent-Teacher
NEA Journal
Personnel and Guidance Journal
Reading Teacher
Review of Educational Research
School Life

In addition to the journals, you may find more exciting educational reading in book form, exciting because it's controversial and the words used are not always so polite. It is fun when the professionals take off their kid gloves and swing hard (and sometimes wildly) to prove a point that seems to be pretty precious to them.

You may be surprised to find yourself taking sides on issues that never before aroused more than a yawn. Don't be so sure you're passive until you give Flesch, Rickover, Bestor, and their companions a chance to get at your blood pressure, and then be honest with yourself by giving Brameld, Harold Hand, and others rebuttal time. You'll be agreeably surprised to note that all educators do not spend all their evening hours grading papers—if you ever did think so!

One other area of reading should be mentioned. It isn't of a professional nature, but it can help fill the gaps left in your college reading. When we spoke earlier about seeing the world through children's eyes, a number of suggested readings were mentioned. Most of them are fun to read, but that certainly doesn't make them any less worthy of your time!

You can expand the list to include other books too, those you always wanted to read. Maybe they tend toward the "Great Books," but on the other hand, they probably will be more in the realm of Steinbeck, Shaw, Dreiser, and Maugham. Nothing is wrong with this choice either, for having the opportunities of living through the fictionalized lives of others can result only in broadening your own. And the children you teach will benefit as well as you.

In fact, it ought to be a "must" to know more about the world in which we live, the undercurrents and forces of politics as they affect us every day, the surge of power of the twenty-first century in Africa and Asia, and the influence of the United States in world affairs. Can the limited, the narrow person possibly be an exciting teacher?

Having a professional and personal library of your own—as well as encouraging your school to start or increase one there—should have come to mind in this connection. Maybe you have a good nucleus of one already. Or did you sell your books each semester?

RESEARCH—TO DO, TO READ, TO USE

Although there is seldom any rush or pressure to get involved in research activities, some young or new teachers are eager to show that they "can do more than teach." If you remember a wonderful little story perhaps you'll put off your research for a while until you're more sure of what you're researching *for*. If your research is as appropriate to the need as the item here fits the purpose for which it was intended, then maybe you should go ahead. Otherwise, a slower approach is more suitable.

The story concerns four friends who were out hunting. When it began to get dark, they looked around and realized they were lost. But luckily, a cabin was nearby; so they headed for it. Inside it looked as though it were occupied, although the occupant wasn't there. Everything looked quite normal, except for one thing: a stove that was suspended by its pipe from the ceiling. They stood around looking at the stove, but couldn't agree on the reason for its strange position.

One was a doctor, who said, "Obviously the person who lives here has arthritis. He can't bend over, so this is his solution."

The second was an engineer. "It gives better heat that way. The angle of the pipe—the location of the stove."

The third was an artist who studied the scene from all sides. "It's

his aesthetic nature," he said finally. "It looks good to him up there."

The last man was a psychologist who felt, "That stove is a conversation piece for him. The owner is a shy character, and this gives him a verbal outlet."

Just then the door opened, and a trapper who lived in the cabin came in. After he recovered from his surprise at seeing his visitors, they asked him the puzzling question. He looked from one to another, and back again, then at the stove, at each of them, and drawled his answer, "Pipe's too short."

So get involved in research if it's appropriate for you, if it doesn't take valuable time from your teaching, and if it fits into the administrative setup of your school. But if one of these situations fails to exist, then wait. There's plenty of time.

Reading the research in your field is a different thing, however, for it helps make a professional of you and may give real vitality to your work. Through digging into the latest that your profession can offer, you have an opportunity to join hands with others in the search for truth. Here is the chance to avoid stagnation.

And as you read what others are finding out in their controlled situations, you will gain new insights to ticklish topics like discipline, grading, parent interviews, and methods of teaching. Your contacts with research may also be in the broader realm of subject matter or content, and the richness comes for you in widening your horizons of understanding in science, social studies, arithmetic, and the rest.

The sources are many, including the professional guides listed below. It's sometimes embarrassing for teachers (both the new *and* the experienced) to admit that they don't know what these publications are or what purpose they serve. No one is checking up on you right now, but how about checking on yourself? *Are these familiar to you?*

Education Index

Encyclopedia of Educational Research

Journal of Educational Research

Mental Measurements Yearbooks

Review of Educational Research

Yearbooks:

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

National Society for the Study of Education

Etc.

LAWS THAT APPLY TO YOU

Although organizations, publications, and research can provide a great deal of important information for you, other sources are the laws of

your state and country, and the professional rules under which you work. The latter may be in the realm of "right" and "ethics," and not necessarily in legal opinions and court proceedings. For example, they may tell you that you *should* not break a contract rather than that you *cannot* do so.

The contract that you sign has two sides, of course, and your rights of employment are protected by it just as much as are the rights of the school district to the services of a potential employee. The rules of your position and its future may be stated in detail, or they may be available in the less accessible regulations of your school board. Although they may not be on display anywhere, they should be available to you for the asking.

Among the kinds of information of importance to you of a more-or-less legal nature are the following:

Duties of various individuals and groups

State superintendent

County superintendent

District superintendent

Various other administrators

School board

School financing, and the record of the community toward it

Millage

Bond issues

Certification requirements: your present position and any you may be contemplating

Salary deductions: retirement, insurance

Sick leave; other kinds of leaves of absence

Tenure and (let's hope of little or no importance!) grievance rules

State laws regarding textbook adoptions, religious exercises, and flag displays and activities

Another whole raft of legal facts is just as important to you as next week's pay check. They are in the area of income-tax regulations, especially on the side of deductions. Each year during the few months before April 15 some of the professional journals run articles that carry hints of how you can save money on your annual tax. They also often have advertisements of recent books and pamphlets that can help you. Of course, a competent accountant who keeps up with the latest rulings may be your best bet, but if your financial life is relatively uncluttered you'll no doubt be able to handle the return yourself.

The best advice is to take all deductions to which you are entitled; the official instructions and inexpensive annual pamphlet from the Internal Revenue Service are designed to help you accomplish this goal. Because your allowances change every year or so, one check of the regulations doesn't do the job. It takes annual watching to save that elusive dollar that belongs to you.

THE PERSONAL RECORD

During the depression years practically all job seekers knew what a "personal data sheet" was. This summary on paper of what one had done educationally and occupationally was required in filling out job-application forms and answering help-wanted advertisements by the dozens.

Fortunately, we've become less concerned about this purpose of the form, with jobs plentifully available. But another point related to it has taken on considerable significance.

Despite the job hunters' market we've had since World War II, the most desirable position will continue to have more than one applicant interested in it. So who will get it? How will the decision be made? What would you do?

The answers should be obvious. If two or more persons apply, and they all look and sound good, then the next step is their personal and professional record. How will you stack up in years to come on questions like these:

Do you change jobs often?

Are your professional references good?

Have you been productive in

writing?

community affairs?

professional organizations?

school affairs?

What education have you acquired beyond a Bachelor's degree?

In other words, are you letting the future take care of itself or are you trying to help it along? We can believe implicitly in fate and yet realize that what happens tomorrow is the direct result of what we do today.

Anthony Trollope, the English novelist, was reputed to be a classic "planner-aheader," but no one is suggesting that you carry things as far as he did. Although married in 1844, and with a wife very much alive in 1851, in the latter year he wrote the following letter:

My Dearest Miss Dorothea Sankey:

My affectionate and most excellent wife is, as you are aware, still living—and I am proud to say her health is good. Nevertheless, it is always well to take time by the forelock and be prepared for all events. Should anything happen to her, will you supply her place—as soon as a proper period of decent mourning is over? Till then, I am your devoted servant.

Anthony Trollope

He lived to the age of sixty-seven, and his wife lived even longer; so this was one occasion where looking ahead *didn't* pay off.

But the odds are that in your situation it will; so an accumulation of worth-while professional experiences may constitute the difference between

teaching where you want to and being forced to take the job that's available because nobody else wants it.

SHOW-AND-TELL TIME

Your main job is teaching children, but men and women don't live by work alone. If you just finished college, you may be the first to admit this fact and to extol the virtues of extracurricular activities.

Of course, there are extremes in solitude and sociability, and the task you have in this direction is to find your own areas of expanding interest. Reading, writing, and joining have already been mentioned. Professional and community activities and organizations also have come into the picture. But the opportunities extend beyond these, far beyond.

The lifetime of the teacher reflects what he's seen and done. His experiences show throughout the what and how of his contacts with children and parents. They are an amplification of that favorite activity of the primary grades, the show-and-tell period, for what we do in the classroom is the display and explanation, the full summation of our past.

No one can *make* you extend your activities beyond your work. Perhaps you're satisfied to limit yourself to your teaching, but the fact remains that you have no right to limit your children. They are entitled to educational relationships with adults who live richly.

Some sample kinds of enrichment can only begin to tap the vast expanse of possibilities open to any person entering the profession of teaching. Here are just a few of them:

Working on a hobby, whether it's building toothpick castles or breeding rare birds or writing commercial verses for birthday cards.

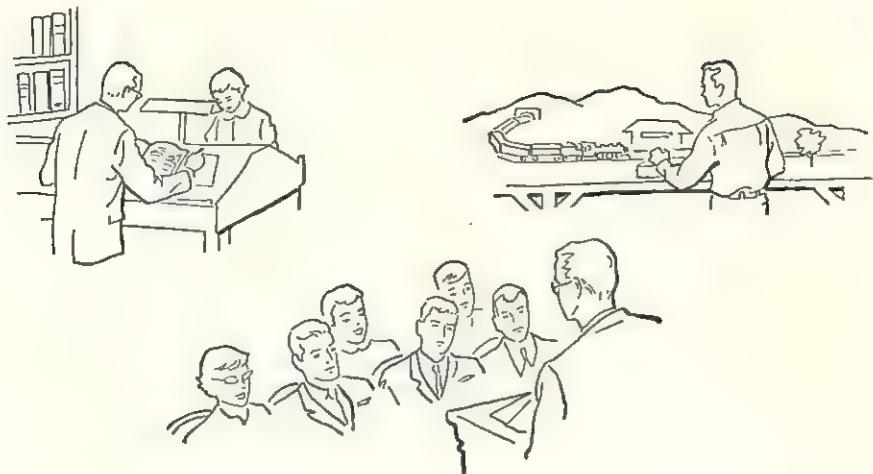
Being a collector, of pictures, ideas, kitchen gadgets, songs, poems, stories, or rhythms.

Traveling, within the limits of your city, state, country, or world, weekends or summers or, if you're a fortunate one, around the calendar some year.

Attending conventions, if the administrative powers can help you arrange for the time and money.

Keeping up with world events, but by balancing the printed "facts" from the various, conflicting sources available.

Making friends, and gaining a great deal for yourself and your children from the variety of occupations and interests they represent.



Experimenting—in science, dance steps, flower growing. Or you choose the area.

One thing leads to another, one idea to others, one experience to others, and the richness of what you accomplish can't stay bottled up. What you do may *not* broaden you and improve your teaching, but we can leave this idea to you and to your discretion. It depends entirely on you—on whether you let your horizons expand, whether you reject the idea of repeating one experience countless times versus exposing yourself to new experiences.

THE MORE FORMAL ENVIRONMENT

This business of moving along and growing on the job needn't all be as informal as the ideas already presented may indicate. At least three settings are available for professional expansion of a more formal nature.

In-service preparation

More and more schools and school districts face the fact that young teachers (just like young engineers and doctors) are not quite finished products. Before you can do a first-class job for your school, it in turn has a responsibility to you. This doesn't mean that the college or university hasn't accomplished its task well; it probably has, but there's more to be done in this new setting.

In-service courses, lectures, and conferences can help smooth out some of the rough spots. Administrators, supervisors, and others men-

tioned earlier can all get into the picture, providing orientation to the system, going into the difficult subjects of merit rating, preparing materials competently for cumulative folders, and discussing topics of personal concern to *this* district.

The nearest college or university

Summer workshops and extension classes, degree or nondegree courses, and lecture series adapted to your school district, with one professor or a team of them, are available; the flexibility can usually be as great as your needs and the creativity of your school demand.

To one of you 100 miles may be near, and to another, 10 miles may be far; so the key point isn't distance. It is more likely to be your answers to these questions: Have I had it? Have I had enough education? Can I face any educational contingency, today or tomorrow? A staccato series of "Yes" answers may be enough to make you stop for a moment and wonder, especially if the limit of your education is a four-year degree.

In the competitive market we always have for good positions, a higher degree takes on added importance. No one would be foolish enough to say that it provides the know-all of the situation, but in the "all things remaining equal" routine it acquires significance in the job-seeking picture.

Alma mater

Follow-up questionnaires, alumni magazines, and the opportunity to keep in touch with your former teachers are all links with the past. And they're connections to be nurtured, too. You never know when you may want a reference letter from someone who knew and liked you years ago.

You may be able to go back for graduate work, and the wisdom of doing so (rather than choosing another institution) depends on various factors like time, money, personnel, courses offered, and alternatives available elsewhere. A rule of thumb is that it's better to have degrees from different places, but there are too many variables for one to generalize.

AND YOU STILL HAVE PROBLEMS

So despite the fact that you're moving along and making real professional headway, you may *still* feel the facial wrinkles forming during and after almost every day. You know where to go for help, but there are some things that don't fit into the conversational framework. You're human, you have problems, and the answers are elusive little fellows.

Time will take care of some of them. In fact, it probably already has. But not all of them. Maybe it won't handle some like those we'll look at now. But maybe it *will* if we put the spotlight of analysis on them.

5

"Nobody Knows the Trouble I'm In"

Oscar Wilde once wrote that "discontent is the first step in the progress of a man or of a nation." If this is true, then no one in any professional field is in for quite as much progress as new teachers! Some are as happy as larks, of course, but the complaints of most others accumulate uncomfortably. The major reason sometimes rests squarely with those of us who preceded them; we just fail to see the classroom, school, and community through their eyes.

No complicated statistical survey is necessary to determine the problems of young teachers. Just ask a question and one gets an answer. At least one gets the answer which indicates what the teacher *feels* is the main difficulty, and that's close enough to the truth for our purposes here.

First, let's list some of the difficulties most frequently mentioned. You'll no doubt find one or more that hit home for you, but we'll cling to the hope that you won't find more than one or two. On the list may be some you've already solved, partially or fully. There will be many ready for solution through the persons, printed materials, and resources mentioned up to this point. Time will take care of others. But there may be a few left which when matched with a particular personality are incapable of solution. They can add up to tragedy for a human being (plus his family) and a loss to the teaching profession.

Our purpose is to keep the unsolved problems to a minimum by bringing them out into the open, digging for answers, and giving up only as a final choice. An additional purpose is to help you be realistic in understanding that some of the unsolved problems are not the monopoly of this field. They also exist in many other vocational areas.

SHARING THE GRIEF

So without further comment let's look at the difficulties as new teachers have expressed them. They are not in any order of importance; if one belongs to you, it obviously is at the top of your list, regardless of where others may place it. And don't some of these difficulties tell a

great deal more about the individual speaking than they do about our profession?

The salary is too low. I'd have a tough time making ends meet even if I were single, but with a wife and two kids ——.

That back-biting gossiping! I thought teachers were different; maybe that was expecting them to be more than human.

I can't take the rigidity of the curriculum. It keeps me from being as creative as I want to be. It even keeps the children from learning as fast as they should.

So where can I meet a man? It's too strictly a female field! (One teacher added to this theme, "I didn't know the last one to ask me was going to be the last one.")

My only problem is discipline. What little monsters they can be! Parents say they have a tough time with one or two, and expect me to act like an angel with thirty-five.

I prepared to teach English and I'm trying to teach history. It isn't fair.

Where is a person supposed to find a decent place to live in this town? The only livable places are too expensive; the only inexpensive places are holes.

There's nothing to do here after school hours. My records are always kept right up to the minute because the recreational opportunities are just plain nil.

Sure, we have a supervisor and a principal and a lot of people around with lots of experience. But who can get to see them? It's almost like Macy's with everything marked down to 98¢!

I know I was hired to teach, but I've never known any more than that about my job. I want to be left alone, of course, but not that much alone.

We're supposed to set examples of broadmindedness, acceptance of differences, and the most literate and educated type of understanding. But I certainly don't find it in this school.

I want to be part of the school scene, but because I'm a new teacher I'm left out. Where's the "team" they talked about?

Who wants a woman boss? I'd rather be on a road gang!

If I only knew how to get started! After that I wouldn't face any real problems, but what to do that first week is my worry.

So they give me a folder for each kid, with the biggest bunch of subjective claptrap and indecipherable test results you ever saw. A lot of good all that stuff does!

My class has IQ's from 63 to 147, one who can't see, another who can't hear, a quiet little guy who never says anything to anybody, a pale little girl who has petit mal seizures—and where in my teacher preparation did I find out about all of them?

When I came to apply I asked for work. I know that. But I didn't expect to have to work nights to keep up with reports. When am I supposed to do the ironing, clean the house, make dinner, and buy groceries?

The theories I learned! How I wish they'd fit!

I like to plan, and then follow through to a T. But in teaching that can't be done—too much interference.

They put me into the toughest class in the toughest school. Why don't they place their experienced teachers in classes like these? As soon as I can apply for a transfer I will; let them find another sucker for this room.

I feel inferior for so many reasons. (And then the reasons spill out: "My own English and grammar . . . I can't spell . . . their parents are so much better educated than I am . . . I guess my IQ is about average, but that little Susan and Jerry go up to 165! . . . wish I could control my temper and patience . . . try not to show that I have favorites, but I'm afraid it slips out . . . it's hard scheduling my work; always till now someone was around telling me what to do . . . thought I knew how to teach rather than what to teach, but the 'how' of it is the main difficulty I now face . . . am I doing what's expected of me? . . . that idea of constant evaluation of children and of my own work has me on the run; I can't even find time to do it once in a while!")

I'm friendly—but it takes two!

I'd do a better job in math and science if I liked them, but I don't find them at all interesting. So my children are being penalized as I probably was by teachers who just couldn't care less.

And there were many, many more problems, sometimes stated very cryptically ("It's just not for me"), sometimes sadly ("If I only didn't have to worry about money"), sometimes hopefully ("Nothing wrong that time won't correct"). Seldom was a problem expressed that couldn't be solved by someone, or some book, bit of advice, or thoughtful reasoning.

ADVICE FROM THOSE WHO KNOW

When new teachers were asked for one-sentence suggestions to those entering the profession, the answers came speedily. Check through them, try them on, see whether any of them fit your situation. A lot of hope and

humor permeated their recommendations.

Realize no job is perfect.

Adapt to the idea that money isn't everything.

Learn the school policies and adjust to them—at first, anyway.

Don't expect too much.

Try out new ideas as much as you can, but be ready to explain objectives and procedures to doubters.

Attempt to find a school where the philosophy is similar to yours.

Remember the "what" and "how," but especially the "why" of education.

Keep your eye on teachers you consider to be successful.

Read the research, and then capitalize on it.

Relax and don't worry so much; you'll learn.

Make every effort to know each student, really know him.

Don't get emotionally involved in children's problems.

Keep your sense of humor.

Establish pleasant relationships with parents and community.

Keep your credit good.

Don't be timid about asking questions.

Realize it's a dull routine only if you let it become one.

Learn from your failures, but don't brood over them.

Stay out of school politics as much as possible.

Get married.

Use your college preparation as a guide.

Don't gripe, belittle, or gossip—at least not too much!

Know your materials.

Keep on living, laughing, reading, learning, enjoying.

Give it a fair chance, but then, if you don't like it, do the school and the children a favor by getting out.

Don't expect a "thank you" every time you do something.

Realize it can be the most rewarding job in the world.

Problems and their answers are personal things—involved, intense, intimate. No one should be so presumptuous as to tell you what to do about them. But it helps to expose and share them. With that idea in mind, maybe we can profitably single out a few of the most obvious examples for you to think about.

"I SHOULD BE RUNNING AN ELEVATOR"

Operating an elevator up and down is a perfectly respectable, necessary occupation. Nobody would dispute this point. And yet, it fails to demand the creativity and adaptations that some other vocational choices are built on. Teaching happens to be one of those other choices, a good example of the job where a personality free to adjust, investigate, and assimilate is needed.

Sometimes the requirements of the work accumulate and bear down on you so quickly (especially during the crucial first year) that you may feel the decision to go into teaching was ill-advised. You may think that it all adds up to a kind of numbing effect of repeated failure to challenge the best that is in you, that perhaps you should have chosen the most routine, repetitive kind of work you could find. Like operating an elevator, for example.

Although in some instances the latter, or something like it, really *may* have been a more appropriate choice, it'd be a rare choice for college graduates who have successfully completed at least an undergraduate program. Apparently you've already demonstrated your scholastic ability, success in adapting to new situations, and aptitude for getting along with others. Your current situation calls for new adjustments, and they may come more slowly than you had anticipated. But they *will* come. Time is on your side, with the period of acclimation extending beyond a few weeks or months for most of you.

"WHO'LL WASH THE CLOTHES?"

Did you ever see the cartoon of the lady with three arms, one holding a baby, the second washing clothes, and the third ironing? Her husband comes home and the caption reads, "How about something to eat?" to which she replies plaintively, "But dear, you can *see* I only have three hands!"

So it sometimes seems to new teachers, especially the married ones. Working wives have been on the increase; they provide topics of conversation for themselves, their husbands, *and* the ladies on the block. The need arises to ask several pertinent questions that have to be answered before the family splits up over too much pressure on one of its members:

Is it necessary that you work, or are you doing so because you want pin money, a new car, or a new house? In other words, how important is this job to you financially?

Are you teaching because you feel very strongly the need for teachers, for *good* teachers, and you want to help alleviate the shortage?

What about your children at home? Are their basic needs for the three A's of achievement, acceptance, and affection being met?

Do you and your husband have enough understanding in common so that you can share the home, as well as the money-making, responsibilities?

Can you get some other kind of help around the house, either from your older children or from someone who can come in once or more a week to lighten your burden? Can you afford to pay for the latter kind of help?

These are merely questions for discussion to help sharpen the issues of the wife working. The answers can be quite revealing in nailing the importance of the job for you and for your family.

Even if all of these questions are answered satisfactorily, the real problem remains unsolved because it pertains to what may seem at first thought to be an unrelated tangent—the disorganized mind.

If running a house requires an orderly thought process to accomplish all the tasks of cleaning, shopping, cooking, washing, and the rest, then organization obviously becomes even more necessary when the work is doubled. A disorganized person can confuse two jobs more easily than she can one; and if her husband is disorderly too, and fails to care about the mess in which they both live, the situation isn't any more palatable—not to the children whose education is in her hands. As the saying goes,



"Foul your own nest," but don't expect some wonderful children to share it with you.

Now this isn't a hopeless situation about which we're talking. Thousands of mothers and wives who teach give eloquent evidence that two jobs can be managed successfully—can even add immeasurably to the rich environment at home and school because of the dual responsibilities. But at least two steps are necessary:

1. Realize it's complicated to run two "homes" well, that the pitfalls are many.
2. Realize that the setting up of a "priority list" and a weekly "block schedule" can come in very handy.

If you've ever worked with (or been) a college student in academic trouble because of too many activities, you'll readily understand how valuable the "priority list" and "block schedule" can be. So many of these students (and they are frequently very capable young persons) overload themselves with school and social activities, all desirable, all important, all of some value to their maturation. There's one simple fact of life that gets in the way, however; the day is just so long, and despite all the advances in science, it can't be expanded. Wives and mothers who teach face an identical problem.

What should have a high priority? What needs to be done first? You can make out your list, plot it into a time schedule, and find that sometimes you're blocking in the same hour over and over and over again.



That means the list has to be trimmed somewhere, doesn't it? Hours for sleeping have to be cut, or television watching, or dishwashing—or maybe even the job of teaching school. Perhaps a half-day teaching position in a school on split sessions or a nursery-school job is the answer.

When a distinction is made between what one *must* do and what one would *like* to do if there is time, a sound weekly schedule may evolve. Until such a time many of us continue to run the rat race of the confused or the greedy, becoming more involved, frustrated, and hard to live with.

You know the result, and so does your husband. So do the children you're trying to teach. After all, if they lose, what is gained from all the grief you may bring to yourself by trying to carry too heavy a load?

"THAT WORKED IN THEORY, BUT—"

The old theory-versus-practice argument received a shot in the arm from a story making the rounds in recent months. It's about a man who had a trained flea. He put it in the palm of one hand, and said, "Jump!" The flea obeyed promptly by jumping into the other outstretched palm. "Jump!" and he jumped back. Back and forth he flew as the man called the command. "Now I want to show you something," said the trainer. "I'll remove the hind legs, and then give the command again." He did both things, and the flea no longer jumped. "My conclusion? Only this—that removing the hind legs of a flea interferes with its hearing acuity!"

That was his theory, but was it really true in practice? Or was there something wrong with his theory in the first place? In the latter question is posed the crux of the whole issue. If it's really a *good* theory, it will work in practice, not necessarily in every instance, but in the majority of cases anyway. The conflict is more apparent than real. Actually, the theory-versus-practice argument is merely a convenient device to combat or reject theories we may not like. It's about as convenient as using the debating device of name calling, pegging the other fellow as being "unrealistic," or "superficial," whether or not he is.

As a new teacher, you have theories and ideas that sound good to you. They're backed up by both common sense and research. It's foolish for you to accept at full value every between-you-and-me-word-to-the-wise from experienced teachers and administrators as a substitute for ideals and convincing explanations of how children learn. Listen, of course. Evaluate what you hear. But don't dismiss new, creative ideas because they are lumped into the basket of "fuzzy" or "impractical" theories. The names attached don't necessarily make them so.

Martin Luther once said that humanity is like a drunken peasant who is always ready to fall from his horse on one side or the other. Our

theories related to feeding of babies (demand versus schedule) and toilet training have changed from one side to another, and back again. So have our theories related to educational practices, but you're entitled to keep yours until *you* decide otherwise. Besides, if they work out well for you in practice, then perhaps that's a good reason for you to retain them as part of your own "tools of the trade."

"LET'S VOTE ON IT!"

Democracy in the classroom has to be very carefully understood, and based on the ability of the children to determine and regulate their environment. But behind all of our discussion of this subject must be the belief that (1) the teacher is primarily responsible for the learning that takes place, (2) the teacher has the greatest contribution to make because of his knowledge, experience, and maturity, and (3), although children may enjoy making decisions, they enjoy even more receiving the guidance of a well-qualified adult who helps them set limits to their activities.

Pupil-teacher planning, with the teacher in the driver's seat, can afford splendid opportunity for the development of adults who will be able to think for themselves, to evaluate critically what they hear and read, and to become active, responsible members of a democracy. Aren't these among our major educational objectives?

Of course, intertwined with this idea is the entire controversial topic of "discipline." It can be defined as narrowly as a rap across the knuckles or as broadly as the whole area of preventing emotional problems and delinquency. Future teachers seldom list discipline as high on their areas of anticipated concern as do first-year teachers, and yet some of the latter fail to realize that discipline isn't the basic difficulty at all. More frequently it may be a deficiency on the part of the teacher: lack of knowledge of subject matter, of children, of one's own philosophy of education, or something else. The climax comes in Johnny's throwing a spitball, perhaps, but he isn't the cause of his own action.

Nor do we always have clearly in mind the distinction between corrective and preventative discipline. Hundreds of articles and many pamphlets and books delve into all aspects of this topic, titles plentifully available through some of the source materials already listed. A few specific titles you may find to be of value are given below:

Discipline for Today's Children and Youth, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Behavior and Misbehavior, James L. Hymes, Jr.

"Special Feature on Discipline," *NEA Journal*, September, 1958 (and other references on page 379 of that issue)

But maybe you want some hints here, with no promise attached that they'll solve all your problems. Let's list some things you can begin to check:

Do you practice "marginal vision" so that you really know what is going on in your room, and so you can anticipate and prepare for problems before they arise? Perhaps you don't know how well you can see marginally; so try this: Look straight ahead with arms stretched out in front of you, slowly move your arms stiffly toward the sides, and then stop when your hands fade out of your line of vision. It's a mighty broad eye span, isn't it?

Do you keep a close tab on the classroom environment as far as temperature, light, ventilation, and the size of furniture are concerned?

Do you know everything you should about your children? Are they really "mean," "troublesome," "cheating," "belligerent" without a cause that can be determined, or does the cause lie in their not hearing, seeing, or mentally absorbing what is going on? In other words, does a disciplinary situation arise because you don't know what is actually behind it, what is basically bothering the child?

Do you adapt your program to what they are capable of accomplishing? This question does *not* mean "watering down."

The hickory stick, the cold look, the hurt expression, the challenging activities, the bright new book—what works for you and what is encouraged in your school and community are the guiding factors for preventing and correcting disciplinary situations. A keynote, however, is this: In the classroom where children are learning and happy, where they and their teacher respect one another as human beings, where there are variety and humor—this is the place where discipline is seldom a problem. It may be anyway, once in a while, because children are human, devilish, and fun-loving (and teachers have moods!), but the basic ingredients itemized above will at least help reduce the clash of personalities and objectives from which all tend to lose.

IT ISN'T EASY

"Anyone who expects to do good," said Albert Schweitzer, "must not expect people to roll stones out of his way, but must accept his lot calmly if they even roll a few more into it." Perhaps it will sometimes seem to you as though the "stone rollers" ought to take a rest, give you a chance to catch up.

But if you've helped one child over a learning hump, you know it's worth it, worth all the work and worry. It generally doesn't take new teachers long to come to this conclusion, either. When children get through the first preprimer, learn to use the dictionary, can explain what fractions or decimals are, enjoy surprising you with an interpretation of a scientific discovery or historical event—any bit of accomplishment, particularly from children whom you least expect to show it, is the thrill above all others in teaching.

This profession is sometimes tough and without reward, but when the dividends *do* come, they constitute a gift beyond comparison. For now you've brought a human being closer to his capacity and helped him learn. Can anyone do more than that?

6

"Be the Opener of Doors..."

A lot of people have things to say about teachers and teaching. They give advice, analysis, criticism, encouragement, all free of charge. From the huge accumulation of words on this subject, let's single out some of the most thoughtful comments from the greatest minds. Here are just a few of them.

The only hope of saving civilization is through enlightened education.
(Tagore)

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free . . . it expects what never was and never will be. (Thomas Jefferson)

Upon the subject of education . . . I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in.
(Abraham Lincoln)

There is nothing more futile than to learn and not to teach . . . he who learns receives but one fifth of the reward of him who teaches.
(Talmud)

And to these remarks you can add your own, which may run something like this, "If I didn't think it was important, I wouldn't be here!"

We pride ourselves so much on being "practical" that we may occasionally feel somewhat embarrassed over having chosen a profession because it is the most vital one in shaping our future world. Seldom do we face the inevitability of tomorrow and of our not being around to do the job that an exciting future will demand. Nor do we often face the accompanying factor: the uncombed, dirty-handed, teasing, swinging, running, climbing, TV-watching little people *are* the adults of that tomorrow, the persons in whose care we leave everything. We leave them the beauty of a gorgeous country, the defense of freedom, and the wedge to untold accomplishments in science and human understandings.

"Let each become all he is capable of becoming" is on the seal of a great university. And this as a guide may help us some day solve the problem of half the people in the world going to sleep hungry every night.

Being literate and scholastically educated isn't everything, however. The importance of those goals is tremendous, but it becomes just a little

less so as we remember, read about, and talk to people who were brutalized and tortured in the very literate *and* incredibly uncivilized regime of Nazi Germany. Human behavior thus becomes one of the keynotes of our educational goals today, behavior based on respect for others as individuals.

Children are tough, much tougher than we sometimes recognize, especially in their resilience to change and pressures, but Margaret Halsey once warned us indirectly when she wrote, "The hearts of children are delicate organs. A cruel beginning in this world can twist them into curious shapes . . . hard and pitted as the seed of a peach."

Herein lies our challenge as we enter a great profession where we can change the way people are and think and grow. No one has a more exciting opportunity than we have, and can do more than we can in the few years allotted to us, to make his mark on time and the centuries ahead.

Ralph Waldo Emerson asked you to "be the opener of doors to those who come after you," an invitation that all of us who preceded you into the classroom eagerly repeat.

Welcome—good luck—and enjoy yourself!

Appendix I

A Check List for the School: Do We Make Them Feel at Home, Wanted, Needed?

Among the many activities in which the school and its personnel can participate to encourage new teachers to like their jobs and to *stay* beyond the first year or two of adjustment are those listed below. There are others, of course. You can add to the list by asking your own new teachers: How could we have done the job better? What should we do for the beginning teachers *next* year?

The "introductory" period doesn't last a day, a week, or a month. It continues as long as one doesn't feel fully integrated into the school program; and as long as it lasts, teachers, supervisors, administrators and others have to keep a sharp eye on areas of possible trouble and dissatisfaction. The morale factor is of continuous importance beyond that period, but not within the scope of our discussion here.

Most of these items are aimed at the preventative approach, avoiding problems in advance whenever possible.

Have one or more of the following write a welcoming letter: school board, administrator, supervisor, teacher assigned to the same school. And it should be a personalized communication.

Assign a continuing teacher to each new one, perhaps from the same teaching level or subject area.

Create the position of "helping teacher" to work with each group of new teachers as long as it seems to be necessary, doing so on an individual basis.

Set up a spring orientation day or evening for prospective new teachers so that you can give advance information regarding the school or school system.

See that each new teacher obtains all pertinent materials and regulations about the children he will have, the community (housing, doctors,

churches, recreational activities), school facilities, meetings, holidays, record keeping, extracurricular duties, ordering audiovisual aids, testing, courses of study, and other important matters.

Work things out so that the mind of the new teacher is as fully at ease as possible about personal things; make it unnecessary for him to ask questions about subjects like pay day, payroll deductions, salary schedules, tenure, leaves (maternity, sickness, and others), insurance, credit union.

Plan a guided tour of the city or locality.

Provide information regarding professional organizations and the availability of professional libraries.

Arrange to have the new teachers meet other beginning teachers as well as the continuing teachers, not only once at a tea, but often.

Arrange to have them meet administrative and supervisory personnel in a friendly, informal setting.

Give the continuing teachers information about the newcomers, and vice versa.

Publicize the new teachers in your local press (and in their home-town newspapers), using news stories, feature articles, and pictures.

Plan a luncheon to introduce and honor the new teachers.

Have the principal, or someone else in authority, on hand before the school year begins, to help out with all the housing, room, and other adjustments that must be made.

Develop continued in-service programs adapted to the needs of the new teacher, adjusting program content on the basis of these needs.

Provide the new teachers with a check sheet which they can use for evaluating and making suggestions for the improvement of the teacher-orientation program.

Consider the limited experience of many of these teachers, especially when making the first assignment.

And—welcome the rest of the teacher's family, too, for one member of a family cannot work up to capacity when the others are unhappy and lonely.

Appendix II

Code of Ethics of the National Education Association of the United States (Adopted 1952)

We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, hold these truths to be self-evident—

- that the primary purpose of education in the United States is to develop citizens who will safeguard, strengthen, and improve the democracy obtained thru a representative government;
- that the achievement of effective democracy in all aspects of American life and the maintenance of our national ideals depend upon making acceptable educational opportunities available to all;
- that the quality of education reflects the ideals, motives, preparation, and conduct of the members of the teaching profession;
- that whoever chooses teaching as a career assumes the obligation to conduct himself in accordance with the ideals of the profession.

As a guide for the teaching profession, the members of the National Education Association have adopted this code of professional ethics. Since all teachers should be members of a united profession, the basic principles herein enumerated apply to all persons engaged in the professional aspects of education—elementary, secondary, and collegiate.

FIRST PRINCIPLE: The primary obligation of the teaching profession is to guide children, youth, and adults in the pursuit of knowledge and skills, to prepare them in the ways of democracy, and to help them to become happy, useful, self-supporting citizens. The ultimate strength of the nation lies in the social responsibility, economic competence, and moral strength of the individual American.

In fulfilling the obligations of this first principle the teacher will—

1. Deal justly and impartially with students regardless of their physical, mental, emotional, political, economic, social, racial, or religious characteristics.

2. Recognize the differences among students and seek to meet their individual needs.
3. Encourage students to formulate and work for high individual goals in the development of their physical, intellectual, creative, and spiritual endowments.
4. Aid students to develop an understanding and appreciation not only of the opportunities and benefits of American democracy but also of their obligations to it.
5. Respect the right of every student to have confidential information about himself withheld except when its release is to authorized agencies or is required by law.
6. Accept no remuneration for tutoring except in accordance with approved policies of the governing board.

SECOND PRINCIPLE: The members of the teaching profession share with parents the task of shaping each student's purposes and acts toward socially acceptable ends. The effectiveness of many methods of teaching is dependent upon cooperative relationships with the home.

In fulfilling the obligations of this second principle the teacher will—

1. Respect the basic responsibility of parents for their children.
2. Seek to establish friendly and cooperative relationships with the home.
3. Help to increase the student's confidence in his own home and avoid disparaging remarks which might undermine that confidence.
4. Provide parents with information that will serve the best interests of their children, and be discreet with information received from parents.
5. Keep parents informed about the progress of their children as interpreted in terms of the purposes of the school.

THIRD PRINCIPLE: The teaching profession occupies a position of public trust involving not only the individual teacher's personal conduct, but also the interaction of the school and the community. Education is most effective when these many relationships operate in a friendly, cooperative, and constructive manner.

In fulfilling the obligations of this third principle the teacher will—

1. Adhere to any reasonable pattern of behavior accepted by the community for professional persons.
2. Perform the duties of citizenship, and participate in community activities with due consideration for his obligations to his students, his family, and himself.
3. Discuss controversial issues from an objective point of view, thereby keeping his class free from partisan opinions.
4. Recognize that the public schools belong to the people of the community, encourage lay participation in shaping the purposes of the school, and strive to keep the public informed of the educational program which is being provided.

5. Respect the community in which he is employed and be loyal to the school system, community, state, and nation.
6. Work to improve education in the community and to strengthen the community's moral, spiritual, and intellectual life.

FOURTH PRINCIPLE: The members of the teaching profession have inescapable obligations with respect to employment. These obligations are nearly always shared employer-employee responsibilities based upon mutual respect and good faith.

In fulfilling the obligations of this fourth principle the teacher will—

1. Conduct professional business thru the proper channels.
2. Refrain from discussing confidential and official information with unauthorized persons.
3. Apply for employment on the basis of competence only, and avoid asking for a specific position known to be filled by another teacher.
4. Seek employment in a professional manner, avoiding such practices as the indiscriminate distribution of applications.
5. Refuse to accept a position when the vacancy has been created through unprofessional activity or pending controversy over professional policy or the application of unjust personnel practices and procedures.
6. Adhere to the conditions of a contract until service thereunder has been performed, the contract has been terminated by mutual consent, or the contract has otherwise been legally terminated.
7. Give and expect due notice before a change of position is to be made.
8. Be fair in all recommendations that are given concerning the work of other teachers.
9. Accept no compensation from producers of instructional supplies when one's recommendations affect the local purchase or use of such teaching aids.
10. Engage in no gainful employment, outside of his contract, where the employment affects adversely his professional status or impairs his standing with students, associates, and the community.
11. Cooperate in the development of school policies and assume one's professional obligations thereby incurred.
12. Accept one's obligation to the employing board for maintaining a professional level of service.

FIFTH PRINCIPLE: The teaching profession is distinguished from many other occupations by the uniqueness and quality of the professional relationships among all teachers. Community support and respect are influenced by the standards of teachers and their attitudes toward teaching and other teachers.

In fulfilling the obligations of this fifth principle the teacher will—

1. Deal with other members of the profession in the same manner as he himself wishes to be treated.
2. Stand by other teachers who have acted on his behalf and at his request.

3. Speak constructively of other teachers, but report honestly to responsible persons in matters involving the welfare of students, the school system, and the profession.
4. Maintain active membership in professional organizations and, thru participation, strive to attain the objectives that justify such organized groups.
5. Seek to make professional growth continuous by such procedures as study, research, travel, conferences, and attendance at professional meetings.
6. Make the teaching profession so attractive in ideals and practices that sincere and able young people will want to enter it.

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